

# Measure



2002-03 Edition

The Literary Magazine of Saint Joseph's College



*Involved For Life*

Measure  
2002-03 Edition

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*Dr. Ernest R. Mills, III*

Printer  
*Faulstich Printing Company*

Cover Art: Self-Portrait by Sarah Kennedy

## Measure

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Damned to Be Guinevere, <i>Liz Henning</i> . . . . .	7
Thursday, <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	9
The Near Conception of Flame, <i>Annie Domasica</i> . . . . .	10
Pieces, <i>Natalie Lapacek</i> . . . . .	11
Barbie on a Walk in the Park, <i>Sarah Clark</i> . . . . .	13
20 Years My Senior, <i>Melissa Genova</i> . . . . .	14
Winter, <i>Annie Domasica</i> . . . . .	15
Untitled, <i>Erin Jones</i> . . . . .	16
Untitled, <i>Lance Crow</i> . . . . .	17
The Vision, <i>Tim Hayes</i> . . . . .	18
Soul Connection, <i>Brandon Hatfield</i> . . . . .	18
bLrOeVaEk up, <i>Kevin Scheer</i> . . . . .	19
The Revenge of the Patwins, <i>Mark R. Seely</i> . . . . .	20
Saturday, <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	22
Poet Training, <i>Mark R. Seely</i> . . . . .	23
Plague, <i>Melissa Genova</i> . . . . .	24
Tin-man, <i>James Cochran</i> . . . . .	26
Morning Glory, <i>Mark R. Seely</i> . . . . .	27
Lost Child, <i>Melissa Alba</i> . . . . .	28
Like a Bad Painting, <i>Melissa Genova</i> . . . . .	29
Inventory, <i>Annie Domasica</i> . . . . .	30

## Measure

---

Untitled, <i>James Cochran</i> . . . . .	31
Cabin Fever, <i>Mark R. Seely</i> . . . . .	32
Absolution, <i>Andrea Ward</i> . . . . .	33
A Palm Reader's Guess, <i>Jen Zak</i> . . . . .	34
Upon Making the Same Mistake..., <i>Melissa Genova</i> . . . . .	35
Thiefl, <i>Kenny Shumard</i> . . . . .	36
The Loss of.../ Memories of..., <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	37
Thespian, <i>Scout Durwood</i> . . . . .	38
Untitled, <i>Michelle Klotsbach</i> . . . . .	39
Unititled, <i>Kenny Shumard</i> . . . . .	40
Frozen Waterfall, <i>Jean Monfort</i> . . . . .	41
Depictions of Her Heart, <i>Bridget Newman</i> . . . . .	42
The Trouble With Rain, <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	43
Patented Yo-Yo Holder, <i>James Cochran</i> . . . . .	43
The Waltz, <i>Scout Durwood</i> . . . . .	44
The Ride, <i>Rebecca Griffin</i> . . . . .	45
The Etiquette of a Lady, <i>Rebecca Scherer</i> . . . . .	46
Stephen, <i>Scout Durwood</i> . . . . .	47
White Stoneware Bottle, <i>Ritchie Delgado</i> . . . . .	48
Rosie's Advice, <i>Rebecca Scherer</i> . . . . .	49
My Father's Pockets, <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	50

## Measure

---

No Title, <i>Rebecca Scherer</i> . . . . .	51
Make Believe, <i>Adam Schoff</i> . . . . .	52
Imitation of Charles Simic, <i>Melissa Genova</i> . . . . .	53
Friday, <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	54
Fear, <i>Susan Huss</i> . . . . .	55
Epiphany of an Innocent, <i>Rebecca Scherer</i> . . . . .	56
34 Golfview Rd., <i>Jen Zak</i> . . . . .	57
...is like..., <i>Nicholas T. Schafer</i> . . . . .	58
where is my dream?, <i>Natalie Lapacek</i> . . . . .	59
When He Smiles, <i>Bridget Newman</i> . . . . .	60
Untitled, <i>Kenny Shumard</i> . . . . .	61
The Plague, <i>Calvin Metts</i> . . . . .	62
Curse the Man, <i>Jen Zak</i> . . . . .	63
Untitled, <i>Kenny Shumard</i> . . . . .	64

## **Damned to be Guinevere**

*Liz Henning*

I know I ought to be content  
With the love that I am given  
But to me this cruel heartless world  
Seems hardly fit to live in.

After years of hapless struggles  
I met one whose love was plain  
His honesty soon won my heart  
And reconciled my pain.

His simple heart he gave to me  
And soon his love he voiced.  
In his honest vow, his faithful heart  
My wounded soul rejoiced.

He nursed my heart soon back to health  
He was not hesitant to start.  
Now to him I feel I owe my life  
So I promised him my heart.

I lived and loved in great content  
I was convinced my love was true.  
Then suddenly, one summer's eve  
I happened to meet you.

Engaging, charming, well mannered, outgoing  
You took my breath away.  
My loyalties were tested then,  
But with my love I vowed to stay.

Your rich persona glittered and gleamed  
And like a moth to flame  
I sought you out, and in my mind  
I wanted you to claim.

I knew I'd never hear your heart  
I knew I'd never see  
That charming, debonair half smile  
Cast alone for me.

I knew soon that I'd fallen for you  
And now admit with trepidation  
That you have somehow come to be  
My accidental inspiration.

I took for granted how close you were  
I thought you'd always be so near  
But now as spring begins to break  
The truth is painfully clear.

Another girl—a worthier maid  
Had laid a claim to you.  
And you return her love and like  
With a heart that's honest and true.

And so my lot is sealed and set  
I shall remain with my love here.  
For it seem through some cruel twist of fate  
I am damned to be Guinevere.

I'll remain by one who loves me true  
Within the fair prison of Camelot  
A dream, that for me, came to an end,  
When I lost my true love, Lancelot.

A declaration of my love  
Is hardly worth the making.  
But I know now that I love you  
For within, my heart is breaking.

## Thursday

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

Running

What a punishment, I cannot imagine  
the sin that caused God to chastise us so.

But we must run.

from...

class to class.

meeting to meeting.

lecture to lecture.

party to party.

beer to beer.

shot to shot.

woman to woman.

I feel hot and cold,  
disgustingly thick and dangerously thin,  
contemptuously smart and immensely stupid.

as if some giant insect  
is eating away at me,  
from the inside  
out



## The Near Conception of Flame

*Amie Domasica*

She pushes the wire-rimmed glasses onto her plain face  
as if they are her superhero cape,  
transforming her from ordinary to profound.

Since she had been small, she had always mothered,  
nurturing her friends with a steady hand  
and a heart that understood far beyond her years.

Hardly noticing her spark, the near conception of her own flame,  
they stream into her room one by one  
and sit upon her couch and bend her ear.

Speaking boldly of God and Sex, timidly of thoughts and ideas,  
they examine nightmares of which they know nothing,  
and dreams they have only just begun to realize.

She breathes life into dreams and extinguishes fears.  
She feeds hesitant love and fuels notions of flight.  
She sets them free and gives them wings...

All the while forgetting, she too has the right to fly.

## Pieces

*Natalie Lapacek*

I pick up the pieces of my life  
In my messy room.

Everything is everywhere,

thrown

or in a place

aside

Only where I can find them.

Yet I can't find them.

Where is that?

I just had it,

where did it go?

Digging is the key.

Buried pieces  
are dark and misshapen

Like fallen tears  
during the  
dismal night.

These do not fit  
in the puzzle.

I put them aside.

and look to the pieces that go  
together.

Those pieces fit,  
Bright like  
Smiles and laughter  
during a  
favorite song.  
These latch together, yet

it is not  
complete.

Could it be

## Measure

---

the lurid goes with  
the vivid?  
The tears and the  
night  
with the song and  
the smile?

**I begin to build**  
the puzzle.

I find more pieces,  
Big, gorgeous bits

That remind me of  
days as a child  
when the world was  
wondrous.

These  
make it complete.

But wait

There are pieces  
in the middle,

Missing.

**I gaze at my**  
unfinished work.

Pieces  
lie      astray,

leaving  
holes in the image

the      picture      has      gaps,

it's not easy  
to make it out,  
to see the whole thing  
in full view,

but what is it?

Is that...

me?



**Barbie on a Walk in the Park**  
*Sarah Clark*

## 20 Years My Senior

*Melissa Genova*

I am not his wife.  
We laid between the sheets tousled  
with infidelity, passion, and sperm.  
He called me “Nora” out of habit,  
and thought I cried in rapture.  
I cried because he mistook me  
for his dark, heavy broad –  
definitive stretch marks on her arms,  
self-colored maroon hair,  
and two times my age.  
I pulled the floral bedsheets  
toward my stomach,  
to cover what he had already seen,  
knowing I was way past modesty.  
And I listened to his snorts,  
watching his curly chest hairs rise as  
he snored – pecs heaving up, down, up, down,  
a slower, gentler motion  
than when he makes love.  
And his wife smiled at me  
behind a clear glass plate on the wall  
as her man stirs again – fondling my hips,  
turning me in, feeling up,  
slipping in, moving down,  
bedsheets falling to the ground  
while the photo stares, grinning, knowing.  
Like a fucking fly on the wall.

**Winter**

*Annie Domasica*

Oh.  
It is cold again  
like last year  
and the air smells  
wet  
it hits me  
like too much hot or too much cold  
in the shower  
like the bad breath  
of a beautiful woman  
I shudder  
shiver  
turn away  
but still it comes  
and I take it in  
harsh  
like daggers  
up my nose  
and down my throat  
icicles in my lungs  
I cough  
hold my breath  
blow  
it owns me no more  
I breathe  
in  
and  
back out.



**Untitled**  
*Erin Jones*

Untitled

*Lance Crow*

Caress me down  
My face is sweat  
A beaded frown  
Taste salt's regret

Arms and palms  
Clenched fists groping  
Her beauty calms  
Her words roping

With pleasure, pain  
The two alone  
Cannot abstain  
Their hearts not stone

Two share one mind  
One body too  
Two hearts combined  
In lover stew

For now love's grand  
Just wait and see  
Your lover's hand  
Could change quickly

So embrace long  
While time doth last  
This maiden song  
Shall soon be past



## The Vision

*Tim Hayes*

Standing in the door of the hallway  
Looking so estranged in paradise  
The descending light  
Restrained itself so slightly

For us it was quite a treat  
Just to be able to meet  
The little scene  
That disturbs the silence.



**Soul Connection**  
*Brandon Hatfield*

bLrOeVaEk  
up

*Kevin Scheer*

A double standard you are  
Your standards are bizarre  
Blinding my eyes chaotic with your diction  
Your grip lacks constriction  
Take me from your presence you withhold  
Tell me all things left untold  
Speak of what you have misled me through  
My emotions have been skewed from this point of view  
Captivate among altercations though there were few  
Left myself battered and bruised  
Emotionally misused  
Yet you seem to be amused  
If only you knew what anguish this relationship brewed  
It took one duel to change the mood  
For myself, I'm sick of this feud

## The Revenge of the Patwins

*Mark R. Seely*

Solano Park is a student-family housing complex built during the dawn of the 1960s on the campus of the University of California, Davis. It consists of a collection of two and three-story rectangular salmon-colored boxes with stucco walls scattered in a quilt pattern across a heavily treed park. We lived there for a couple years during the early nineties, entirely unaware that we were living on an Indian burial ground.

The discovery occurred when the university tried to install an automatic sprinkler system and began unearthing bodies. The bodies, it was eventually decided, were the remains of Patwin Indians, most of whom died in a small pox epidemic that swept through the area in the mid eighteen hundreds, compliments of the local Christian missionaries. The Patwins were never a tribe in the Hollywood sense of the word. They were just a bunch of folks who lived and fished along the muddy creek that now forms the northwest border of Solano Park. The word *Patwin* simply means *people*. Apparently when the first whites came into the region someone asked the Indians what they were called and they responded “people” and became an official tribe from that point on.

The burial ground was a real problem for university grounds keeping. The problem, of course, is what do you do with all the bodies lying right where you want to lay PVC pipe? The anthropology department wanted to excavate and use the site as an outdoor classroom. The department of Native American studies screamed that that would be sacrilegious. Eventually political correctness won out and one of the last surviving members of the Patwin tribe, a woman living somewhere in Pennsylvania, if I remember right, gave her consent to have the bodies relocated.

All this happened the summer we moved out.

While we lived there the ducks were the biggest problem. There were lots of them. But the problem wasn't their numbers so much as their mating habits and the fact that Solano Park was home to dozens of very impressionable young children. Each spring the ducks would mate—anywhere and everywhere. What bothered the local parents, however, wasn't the sheer exposure to the carnal act, but the fact that duck mating rituals look exactly like violent biker gang rape episodes: two or three males stalk and jump a female, and as the female attempts to escape, the male who is presently mounting her bites viciously at the back of her neck, sometime pinning her head to the ground at awkward and painful-looking angles. I witnessed a particularly brutal three-male copulation occur outside the building on campus that housed the woman studies department. Just on the other side of the wall, I imagined, was a classroom full of militant lesbian man-haters. And I wondered what they would make of the scene.

But the rough duck sex was nothing compared to the carnage that happened after the little ducklings hatched. It started out the same every year: mother ducks would walk around the park with seven or eight little babies all in a row behind them. And the little children would run out of their apartments and squeal and say “Look mommy, baby ducks!” and the mommies and daddies would take out their camcorders and cameras to take pictures of their cute little children smiling and pointing and laughing at the baby ducks. But then the sky would darken. And big black crows would swoop in from hell and line up on the eaves of the buildings. The crows took turns pouncing down and snatching the last duckling in a line while the children screamed and the parents tried to

shoo them away. What was worse was that the crows appeared to do it just for sport. They never ate the ducklings. They just carried them to the rooftops, shook them back and forth until their necks snapped, dropped them down on the sidewalk, and then swooped down to get some more. Overprotective mothers tried to hide their children from the spectacle—some even chased the crows off with brooms, but to no avail. The entire park watched in horror as rows of eight ducklings were whittled down to six, and then three, and finally one or two. And even then the crows would shadow the remaining duckling—too afraid to confront the larger mother duck directly, but hoping for that one moment of inattention, that one misstep when the duckling strayed just out of mom's reach.

Years later I had a dream that the crows were the spirits of the dead Patwins and the ducklings were little fluffy pox-infested missionaries.

## Saturday

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

I am supposed to confess.  
But to what? What shall I confess to,

Shall I say that when I was ten  
I ran away. Or that the car accident  
was not caused by a stray deer, but my  
straying mind.

Saturdays are good days to confess,  
they are lazy, as unmotivated as an  
old dog, who has long forgotten his  
tricks.

Shall I cry and beat my breast  
as I tell of the time that I pushed  
Mitch down the stairs  
out of frustration and revenge.

Saturdays are as good for confessing  
as Sundays are for forgiving.

Shall I confess that I secretly  
tried to forget my love. For my family.  
For my God. For that girl.  
For myself.

But Saturday will not let me forget,  
it holds me and forces me to confess,  
to relive the pain and the horror  
of my weakness.

I hate Saturday.

## Poet Training

*Mark R. Seely*

Poems about fireflies are too easy –  
miniature green comets like kings  
riding the wake of cicada heralds  
into airless July evenings –  
and love is an anchor in quicksand.

Perhaps a dead raccoon holds some challenge,  
crimson intestines draped across the asphalt –  
a midsummer bouquet offered by a roadside vender

**Plague**  
(loose imitation of Allen Ginsburg's "Howl")

*Melissa Genova*

I have known people who are content with their lonely world, quirky and  
freeloving, but  
    are dangerous because they know of nothing else  
who sit with coffee for hours staring at the cream swirling in coffee and touching  
    the rim of their cups like it's the body of a man or a woman, not realizing  
    how cold the outside world is,  
who tap their feet on street corner humming songs with their lips tight and  
pursed  
    eyes, not realizing someone just handed them a five in their "I Love NY"  
    mug,  
who close their doors to the hotel and stack the mini bar rums up in a pyramid,  
    praying that they won't tumble and crack before they get a chance to let  
the  
    warm, sticky liquid burn their tonsils,  
who use their chords to praise and hollar, their gray and black suits noticeable  
from  
    a mile away (as if the "Hallelujah's" don't give it away) and their  
audiences  
    avoid them and their blue papers printed with crosses, but they go on,  
who paint themselves in watercolors and oils even though there are canvasses  
    around, not realizing that they are simply naked and covered in colored  
    fluid, and try to put a price tag on themselves, which could never nearly  
be  
    enough,  
who lick their laptops with no fear of electrical wires, just maybe a virus  
    interrupting their play with webcams, and windows, and weirdos, and  
    wizards for roleplay,  
who have tapped into that alternate universe sci-fi writers have been trying to  
    discover since the invention of dimensions by people  
who can see colors and sound waves tearing at other people's bodies while they  
    strut and talk on cell phones, aware of technology and spirituality, yet  
lack  
    common sense when it comes to living,  
who kneel in a room praying to a shrine of needles and *Cosmopolitan* magazines  
    and cosmopolitan drinks, searching for a place where heroine hits faster

and the alcohol tastes sweeter, because they feel they're a plague to  
humanity,  
who watch as their cigarette burns into ash, eventually blistering their painted  
lips

as they pull down their skirts that are shorter than a pop song.  
There's an empty room with a blank book  
where we write our own story  
and one candle to write by.  
There's an empty bedroom with a mirror  
that won't distort what we see and  
a mattress where there should be a straightjacket.  
Then the candle goes out.  
I am there, insomnia.  
I am there, vicadin.  
I am there, plague.





**Tin-man**  
*James Cochran*

## Morning Glory

*Mark R. Seely*

The sun draws you upward  
seeking light around the corners of my shadow.  
Gently coiling tendrils have entangled my  
mind – the thought of you,  
soft petals wind blown against my age-weathered bole.

A scent that is clay and earth and sunrise,  
a dew-soaked smile  
fresh and new as dawn,  
young as dawn is young each morning  
and has been so since the very beginning of  
time – an ancient naivete carefully practiced,  
rehearsed for eons  
and almost mastered but for that very first glimpse,  
the first appearance in the first scene of the first act  
as purple daybreak's first cautious footfall treads softly upon the stage,  
a telltale glint of eternity slips through the mask.

I am unguarded and unarmed and unprepared  
as you caress old wounds  
and find sturdy foothold in the uneven places of my soul.

Transience is your abiding essence,  
your laughing day-long dance.

And I become intoxicated at the thought of you.

## Lost Child

*Melissa Alba*

this little girl  
she sits on her bed  
staring at the glitter nail polish  
-cyanide sparkles black tar lacquer on her squared nails,  
naked toes her mother used to pluck so lovingly  
like pizzicato strings on a violin,  
this little piggy in C-minor.

eventually, all the other little piggies cried *wee wee wee*  
all the way home...  
all the little girls she knew in school  
found their way home,  
found their way to love,  
found their way to cope;  
yet, this little girl just cried *wee*.

she picks pilld wool off the arm of her sweater,  
tugging at the loose purple strings at the wrists  
where the scars remain;  
she doesn't know why she's torn and broken  
and not even all the king's men,  
not even all of her friends can put her back together again...  
she keeps unraveling her stupid purple sweater  
instead of mending her soul.

she is no little Miss Muffet, for she doesn't scream  
in the face of a spider because she's tougher than that  
-a feminist who believes in the advancement of all women;  
yet, she deconstructs herself piece by piece...  
this Mary never had a little lamb or any food that wasn't vegan;  
if she can spare their flesh, she can spare her own.

this little girl and her ex-flame.  
this little Jill and her Jack:  
all he ever did was push her down the hill,  
never once tumbling after...

if you didn't know her like i do,  
you would think that she's just a quiet little girl  
who sits on her bed, paints her toe nails,  
and fixes her sweater.

but her pain moves...  
slower than you or i.  
slower than she could ever show you.  
slower than life in nursery rhyme.

## Like a Bad Painting

*Melissa Genova*

He gazed at me like a bad painting  
with brilliant ideas,  
decked out in blue jeans, bubbles, bedbugs,  
breast, and blank glances.  
He glued his hands to my waist,  
waiting, watching for my next piece  
played on an out-of-tune piano,  
me plunking Puccini with a placid personality  
forming in my fingers and fake nails  
flaking away like finger paints on concrete  
cursed by sunlight and coarse Chicago winds that  
whistle through a window decorated with  
all-American apple pie.  
My skin peeled away slowly,  
my spine slinking back and  
allowing myself to slouch when he stepped near me.  
Tap, Tap, Tap.  
My feet became impatient little girls  
in pink tu-tus and toe shoes.  
And he said he believed in me like a Galileo theory,  
And like a soft yellow towel when the tide comes.  
He was touching me like time before  
it slithered through his fingers,  
or like a painting about to fall off a wall.

## Inventory

*Annie Domasica*

one moment  
one tear  
one silence  
one scent  
one picture remembered  
one night I won't forget  
one pair of sweatpants  
one shirt with holes  
one bed of memories  
one withered rose  
one second  
one word  
one question  
one sigh  
one pillowcase I won't wash  
one towel I can't dry  
one card from Christmas  
one line of a song  
one calendar from last year  
one thing was wrong  
one comment  
one kiss  
one earlobe  
one tongue  
one pair of diamonds  
one song sung  
one fairytale written  
one letter to send  
one chapter too short  
one unhappy end



**Untitled**  
*James Cochran*

## Cabin Fever

*Mark R. Seely*

1

Against the window pane  
like so many white horses  
crashing out of the dust  
and into the water at the base of a steep hillside,

a suicide run of March snowflakes.

2

March,  
and the snow finally comes  
unapologetically late—  
a businessman delayed by a board meeting.

Icy dust devils form  
and disintegrate outside the window,  
spinning cylindrical brooms  
sweep the baleens of beached white whales.

3

In the neighbor's garden  
small icicles cling like ethereal spiders  
to the wooden blade of a decorative windmill  
while I contemplate the difference between stillness

and immobility

## Absolution

*Andrea Ward*

Why do the fires of Hades fall upon me?  
The mountains shake through our black tirade  
Of direst cruelty we scream ourselves empty  
The deep hole we dig our emotions have made

For every curse that flies from our lips  
An angel of love falls dead at the sound  
Feelings, memories, a harsh word rips  
Tears out the life so easily found

When the cold dust has settled  
When the rage has run thin  
Rain pours into a kettle  
To be boiled within

Perhaps we have stumbled on the road to bliss  
Maybe our efforts haven't amounted to much  
But emptiness, sorrow, have told my mind this:  
Sometimes, forever is only a crutch

The long road ahead looks bleak and barren  
He calls from the twisted wreckage behind  
Nothing can turn me away, and I daren't  
I fear that comfort in his voice I would find

Alone in the void  
I hear a new voice  
I want to avoid  
I don't have a choice

My heart cries for him  
A new star in the dark  
A warm, loving hymn  
A clean new start



## **A Palm Reader's Guess**

*Jen Zak*

Twenty dollars  
I paid at a fortune telling booth  
next to the McDonald's  
on the boardwalk of Virginia Beach.

Twenty dollars  
for a woman in a turban  
to tell me when I'll die,  
have children, and get married.

Twenty dollars  
for a prediction that changed my life,  
channeled my future decisions  
and brought me where I am today.

Twenty dollars  
and now look at where I am  
I sacrificed my dream  
because she said it wouldn't come true.

Twenty dollars  
and all I found out  
was that I would have two children  
and I can sometimes be quick tempered.

## Upon Making the Same Mistake More Than Twice

*Melissa Genova*

(It got hot in here all of a sudden)  
I play the part that everything's  
cool, and I'm alright, and you  
won't make me cry when I'm  
alone tonight, and no I'm not a bit jealous.  
I'll play that part until a  
sound so loud reverberates  
in my ears making it  
impossible to think.  
I'll play the part of classy when I  
really want to splash a  
glass of cherry coke all  
over your polo shirt,  
and storm off to cheers  
like the hot rock star I think I am.  
I've been this "girl" so many times  
It's just easier to walk  
Away, knowing either you'll call  
and everything will sorta be ok,  
or I'll never hear from you again  
except awkward silences and  
quick knowing glances,  
maybe a "hi," maybe an  
empty vow to call sometime.  
I'll play the part of  
Perfectly stoic, perfectly cute,  
Perfect smile.  
Perfect for you, I'm non-confrontational. Perfect  
for me that I can handle this.  
(All of a sudden, it's gotten awfully cold in here)

## **Thief!**

*Kenny Shumard*

Thief!  
You stole my attention.  
I was guarding it  
To parcel out a bit at a time  
To ration it.  
And along you came  
And your careless-carefree soul  
Snuck in and ripped it from me, all at once.  
I doubt you even realize you've done it.  
Is it possible that in the exchange  
I captured a bit of yours, too?

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

**The Loss of the Shuttle Colombia**

It was a great show,  
Kind of like the air show,  
my dad took me,  
when I was 12.

Bright streaks across the sky,  
A punishing flash of light.  
But this time it wasn't so exciting.

I woke up late, 10:45.  
Didn't have a clue.  
John told me, his brother called.

CNN was a mess,  
New reports every 2 minutes.

We sat,  
We watched,  
I remembered.

I saw the last one  
In '86.  
Challenger.

**Memories of Challenger**

---

The whole school was there, K-5.  
I remember the countdown,  
10  
We didn't know what was going on,  
9  
I was talking to Mitch,  
8  
The principal told us this was very important  
7  
A teacher was going into space  
6  
I like space  
5  
Luke Skywalker lived there,  
4  
Wondered if the teacher would get to meet him,  
3  
Thought I wanted to be an astronaut,  
2  
Saw a movie about space camp once,  
1  
It would be cool to live in space,

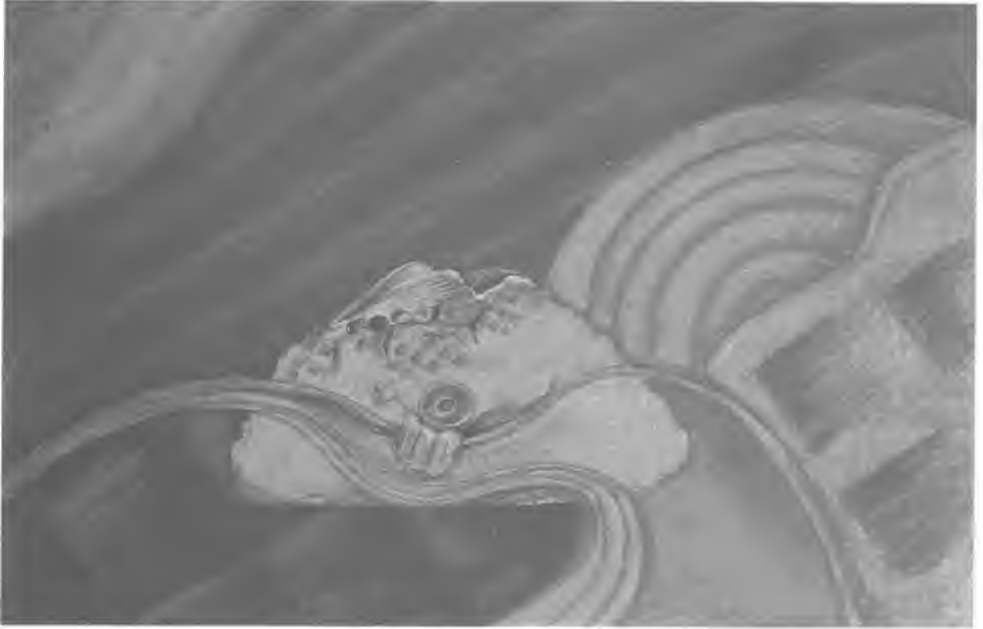
**LIFTOFF**

Up, up and away....BOOM  
Fire consumed the shuttle  
I thought it was cool—  
things blew up on TV  
all the time.  
We just didn't understand.

## Thespian

*Scout Durwood*

O, acting is not magic; it is art.  
Like dream to the creative soul, or alcohol  
to college boys. Acting is like air.  
One does not stop at curtain calls: to bow  
is not to end, for that's where I'm alive—  
on stage. With rage and wrath, and ecstasy.  
O, acting is like air. A myriad  
of words to trip and tumble, flit and fall  
from corners of my mouth to corner of  
your humble ear. That's where I live: on stage,  
beneath a glass that magnifies and lies.  
War is not blood and gore on stage,  
but death so proud and noble. Grand soliloquies  
and bended knees, and tragic loss and love.  
O, I can fly on stage. These words are not  
mine own, and yet somehow they find their way  
to places deep within my "magic if"  
and they are mine: my fairy jewels from page  
to stage to rage to praise, to swallow whole  
like Sunday on the beach with ebbing tides  
that sink and rise like actors' will to live.  
For we are not a happy bunch. Oh no,  
We are much more. We are elation and  
despair, melancholy  
madness like a bear in winter and a  
butterfly at dawn. It is my home, where  
I belong, for every other place I  
go I am somehow estranged.



**Untitled**

*Michelle Klotsbach*

## Untitled

*Kenny Shumard*

Everyone's gone and I'm alone again.  
It's always worst right after they leave  
When the memories are still fresh  
And the numbness hasn't set in yet.

I'm left wondering if the memories are real  
If the good times and close friends I had  
Were more than just conjurations of a lonely soul  
There's plenty of time to ponder  
Now that I'm alone again.



**Frozen Waterfall**  
*Jean Monfort*



## Depictions of Her Heart

*Bridget Newman*

A red, pulsating, fragile thing  
So completely vulnerable  
To them  
To Men  
Yearning for understanding  
It does not find understanding  
In them  
In Men  
It is really quite a contradiction of itself  
It is weak in the hands  
Of them  
Of Men  
Pain flows through her veins  
But she opens her heart everyday  
For them  
For Men  
Because she thinks there is something only a man can do to her  
He makes her heart fly above the clouds  
And so she gives it to them  
Leaving her warmth in them  
Only thinking of them  
And only living for them  
Never for herself.

## **The Trouble With Rain**

***Nicholas T. Schafer***

Jealousy is  
as predictable as the rain,  
Never far away,  
Starting as a trickle,  
Then without warning  
Spewing out  
in  
*Gafoppping* torrents.



**Patented Yo-Yo Holder**

***James Cochran***

## The Waltz

*Scout Durwood*

My foot is twelve inches long—  
Twelve inches in a foot.  
(Mathematicians would revel in it)  
From heel to toe:  
one two three four five four three two one. two one.  
So every time I step I have moved twelve inches.  
Three feet between my steps.  
Twelve inches.  
Two feet.  
Three feet right heel to left toe.  
Like do re mi fa so la ti do.  
Do ti la so fa me re do.  
Twenty four million miles to the world.  
A quarter of a second to take a step.  
(Even less to make it count)  
One hundred and twenty billion feet.  
(Ten times as many toes)  
Over three  
Times point two five.  
(Mr. Washington with ridges)  
Make love and war.  
Million of steps.  
Billions and trillions of steps to change the world.  
Twelve inches heel to toe.  
Like the first note of a symphony...  
The first digit in pi...  
Twelve inches head to toe.

## The Ride

*Rebecca Griffin*

Things go by,  
The harder we try - the faster they go.  
We continue on this rough ride called life.

The roads are bumpy and cause some pain.  
There is no pavement, only gravel remains.  
Our decisions and actions provide the bumps.

Our thoughts are the car in which we travel.  
Mine, a junker in need of much work,  
With too many miles, too little maintenance.

The ride is rough,  
The road is bumpy.  
We wonder if it will ever end.  
Yet somehow we all live on,  
Through this difficult ride.

## The Etiquette of a Lady

*Rebecca Scherer*

*Look at them over there.*  
Huddling in a hushed circle,  
stories told through thin lips  
behind expensive hands,  
laughing eyes flashing  
with morbid curiosity  
petty laughter blocking  
the entrance of a wandering stranger.  
Gossip.

*In pairs—never alone, of course—they break away from the safety of their  
circular fortress and head to class. I follow; I listen: I gain insight to the fairer sex.*

Test day: they discuss their chances of acing.  
With sinister smiles and plan in their hearts,  
they sit in the front row.  
A flash of leg as one hikes her skirt up,  
stretching its long bareness under the desk;  
a peek of skin as the other pulls her blouse down,  
leaning forward, her eagerness a mockery.  
Manipulation.

*They leave just as they entered. One parts from the other, a smile on her face, as  
she tails the professor. I follow; I listen; I gain insight to the fairer sex.*

In his office: they discuss her failing grade.  
going through the motions, she recites  
the traditional excuses,  
pseudo-panic rising in her voice:  
she is planning her attack carefully.  
Professor shakes his head; girl lowers hers.  
Pitiful sobbing breaks the heavy silence  
as her black mascara forms rivers down her face.  
Comforting her into silence, Professor handles his red pen  
as a knight would his broadsword.  
Pity.

*Ah... the etiquette of a lady...*

## Stephen

*Scout Durwood*

A breathless stream of consciousness

T-H

“th”

The tongue comes in contact with the teeth like a snake.

My lover bruised my nipples with his teeth.

Terrific (roll the “r”)

I feel my glasses and my jeans.

Stan’s hat. I could be his lover.

Vertigo – roll the “r”.

Can they see my thoughts?

It is gone.

Caffeine, taurene, guanine, cytosine.

Darwin and Aristotle.

It is gone.

I have ebbed.

My pills.

Velvet Underground – my heroine.

I am a virgin. (Do not roll the “r”)

I want more drugs to kiss and corrupt me.

This is terrible poetry.

A yellow submarine.

To act is to do.

Pick up your internal tempo.

Choose between his thoughts and mine.

It is 8:00; where am I?

I have to walk to the beach. The letter “O” is dirty and erotic.

O, trespass brightly urged. Give me my sin again.

The lips are pursed with an “m.”

Too many boxes to break out of.

O, trespass brightly urged.

Close your eyes and see.

Acting is not magic, it is art.



**White Stoneware Bottle**  
*Ritchie Delgado*

## Rosie's Advice

*Rebecca Scherer*

"We can do it!" she says.  
Her callused hands and muscular arms are  
a mutiny to her sex  
and contradictory to her shiny brown curl  
and perfectly sculpted brows.  
Still, "We can do it!" she says.  
Well, I'm sure we can, but...  
Why should I want to?  
Why do I need to be an  
*Independent Woman?*  
What's so wrong with being  
*Old Fashioned?*  
So I want to cook –  
So I want to clean –  
I want to wear my housedress  
and my high heels  
and smile at the vacuum cleaner  
as we glide over the carpet.  
I want to have dinner  
on the table at 6  
and talk to myself at breakfast  
as my husband grunts in response behind the paper.

Does this make me a bad person?  
We're all entitled to our opinions  
and our own choices in life.  
Why do I feel less  
in the presence of more liberated women?  
They are no better than me,  
their choices no better than mine.

Her stern expression threatens me  
and raises a pang of guilt  
as I call down the hall  
for a Big Strong Man  
to open the pickle jar  
instead of trying a little harder myself,  
for fear of breaking a nail.



## **My Father's Pockets**

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

### **My Father's Pockets**

The old plaid hat,  
Crumpled and folded,  
A whiskey flask,  
Car keys, and  
Half used matchbooks,

### **My Father's Pockets**

Clunky car keys  
an old pocket knife  
twisted bits of wire  
a tiny screwdriver  
a chipped arrowhead  
crumpled lottery tickets  
a lego.

### **My Confessor**

Slacktoothed smile  
Squinted eyes  
Peaking crown,  
through tufts  
of retreating hair,  
stubby legs  
carry on  
from place to place,  
funny man.

**No Title**

(modeled after the Emily Dickinson poem  
"I like to see it lap the Miles")

*Rebecca Scherer*

It comes to me when I'm sad,  
keeps me company when I'm lonely  
and in need of comfort  
or words of wisdom;

Freely raising itself into the air,  
it wafts around and drifts in the current,  
weaving between my ears and my soul;  
and then the flourish comes,

wrenching or lifting my heart,  
crying or laughing in time,  
all the while opening my soul  
and bearing wide,  
forcing my inhibitions into obsolescence;

Then hesitating in the air  
like the scent of apple pie,  
it ends – quietly and alone –  
until the rhythm spins me again.

## Make Believe

*Adam Schoff*

Zeno proved that the phone will ring  
and we'll never pick it up  
The antelope lives in the woods  
and he'll never lose the hunt  
He show'd us things that we'd never know  
and we could not comprehend  
What magic thoughts we would have seen  
if we crawled up in his head

Spread your wings said the little man  
to the girl who made believe  
She lives down on Market Street  
between the willow trees  
He tells stories of days he spent  
dreaming little things  
Like planting trees and raising geese  
and his circus full of fleas

The land of make believe lies  
between your ears I know  
Where antelopes answer phones  
and the magic tree tops grow  
I know you've never been there  
and I know you want to go  
Above the flea circus  
where the geese fly in a row

## Imitation of Charles Simic's "Charles Simic"

*Melissa Genova*

Melissa Genova is coffee.  
She is addicting and hot.

Is she decaf or caffeinated?  
She is laced with Kahlua.  
She is sugar sweetened.

How do you take coffee in?  
Drinking, slurping, and lapping are all ways.

What does she taste like?  
She's got a flavor all her own.

What is added to the coffee?  
A chocolate spoon to mix it up.

How do she hit the tongue?  
She's strong, yes,  
but easy to ingest.

Who is drinking the coffee?  
An innocent, a whore with blue eyes,  
a homeless man in an X-files hat.

Will she end up in a lap or an old pot?  
She'll end up in the mouth of a curly haired poet and a stain in his book.

## Friday

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

I have surrounded myself,  
with excellence. Built up  
a vision of open mindedness.  
and watched that vision  
fall, into the dust.

Education is not synonymous  
with wisdom. The educated are not  
flawless, sometimes their words  
are the most flawed.

What is it then to be educated?

Is an education nothing more than a mere re-arranging of prejudices?

Trading in prejudices  
of race and religion for new  
intolerances.

## Fear

*Susan Huss*

Fear is the fantasy island you can't reach  
Because you won't get on the plane.

Fear is the movie you won't be in  
Because you can't face the audition.

Fear is the grandmother you won't visit  
Because you don't know how long she'll survive.

Fear is the book you won't write  
Because you think no one will read it.

Fear is the one who can't love you back  
Because he doesn't know you love him.

## Epiphany of an Innocent

*Rebecca Scherer*

Shreds of love letters,  
withered roses,  
and tear-stained pillows  
are all that remind me  
of you.

You wrote me poems  
declaring your undying love,  
and sent me flowers  
just to make sure  
*I believed you.*

Now the torn bits  
of those oppressive letters  
lie scattered  
throughout my bedroom.  
The roses sit in  
an almost empty vase,  
wilting and dying  
like my respect  
for you.

The only signs of warmth  
are the hot tears  
still fresh on my pretty pillow case;  
the only sign of life:  
my genuine smile.

## 34 Golfview Rd.

*Jen Zak*

The tires of my explorer crunch  
over the freshly fallen snow  
as I leave the place  
that I sometimes call home.

My rearview mirror shows  
my solace closer than it really appears,  
but I know in my heart  
that I'm going farther and farther away.

The driveway looks lonely now  
embracing the tracks left by my tires  
an imprint that will be gone, like me,  
in the morning.

A small figure in a hooded jacket  
is left alone there now, stamping his feet  
and waving as I pull away  
onto a busier street.

My car rumbles and creaks telling me  
that it too is just as sad as I am.

It leaks its inky tears  
onto the street  
and I silently cry into my mittens,  
both attempting to appear composed.

My car does not like the streets it travels today.  
It slips and slides along,  
moaning and squeaking  
as we go on our way.

Our only comfort  
is my stereo playing  
that he installed  
in the driveway last summer.

It sings sweetly to us  
as we say goodbye  
and attempts to soothe  
our lonely souls.



### **...is like...**

*Nicholas T. Schafer*

Jealousy is like rain, sporadic and ever changing.

Memory is like baseball, hard and useful, until someone knocks the stuffing out of it.  
or...age knocks it out of the park.

Boredom is like cut grass, severed from the world and waiting...

Pride is a spade, digging and digging—in vain—becoming more and more dull with time.

Contempt is like acid, spinning and churning in your stomach—teasing ulcers and eating away at

your insides.

Hypocrisy is like a boomerang, throw it hard enough and it will come back to hit you.

Loneliness is like a glass cell, you can see out, but no one can get in.

Loneliness is like a fire extinguisher, hanging on a wall, suffering from disuse, waiting to save the day.

Sincerity is like fur-lined gloves on a February day.

Insecurity is like a cold blanket, that is too short and never covers your feet.

Longing is like sandstone in a quarry, waiting for the mason's hammer.

Guilt is like a ball of undigested cheese, sitting in the pit of your stomach—fermenting.

Confession is like an old sneaker, not something that you would wear in public, but feels so good?

Disgust is like a red balloon, swelling, stretching, until—POP—the end.

Humor is like a white feather pillow.

Envy is like a half-empty bourbon glass, you can't stop—yet you always want more.

Fear is like running down a country road; no matter how far you run, there is always more road.

Pain is like a close-talker,

Sometimes you can see it coming,

sometimes you can't,

Sometimes it blindsides you,

sometimes you can run,

Sometimes it catches you,

sometimes it won't let you go,

But you can never, ever escape.

**where is my dream?**

*Natalie Lapacek*

excitement is so far away  
it has escaped my vision.

where is my dream?

I had it in my hand  
not so long ago,  
it was light and soft  
like a feather  
but somehow,  
it got away  
and lost itself,  
too weak to  
overcome  
the world's harsh winds.

I long to have my dream  
that was a voice  
pushing, urging me

to take the chance,  
to keep my visions,  
to never let them go.

but I let it go.

## When He Smiles

*Bridget Newman*

When he smiles  
The world lights up  
and me, especially,  
I see stars  
'Cause of those lips  
Like slices of a  
Salmon sky  
A tangerine treat for me every night  
And every day that I want some of that  
And that is every day  
That I want him  
When he smiles  
My heart pounds fast  
And I know what he's thinking  
'Cause I'm contemplating, too,  
Where we're going to do what we want to do  
Yeah the maps of our brains  
Are laid out the same  
We are cartographers  
In well-known lands  
Yeah we've got each other figured out  
When he smiles  
He makes it easy  
To fall in love with his face  
It's the kind you don't get  
Tired of  
Sick of  
Bored of  
Like a puppy that doesn't grow up  
And he knows it  
And he uses it  
To tease me  
And though you might think that's not a good thing  
I assure you that it is  
When he smiles  
It's the sweetest thing I know  
It's my favorite thing to show off to my friends  
I love to make him laugh  
So I can see those lips part  
And that's when I know most  
We're meant to be  
Especially  
When he smiles

**Untitled**

*Kenny Shumard*

Out of nowhere  
Childhood memory  
Lost and gone for years  
5<sup>th</sup> grade  
Lunchroom – working  
Lisa Felty  
“¡Ay Carumba!”  
I liked her earrings.  
I thought she was pretty.  
I was shy.  
She walked away.  
Lisa Felty.

## The Plague

*Calvin Metts*

Everything is on tilt, like homes freshly built lacking foundation  
The Plague is in full effect and it's killing my Black nation  
Blacks must be content with our futures being jagged  
We're so used to being high that we're in a continuous state of jet lag  
Maybe it's true  
You rep what you sow  
And if you sow in fertile soil your seed will grow  
But how will that seed grow if the youth aspire to be on the corners yelling "Rocks and Blow?"  
Niggas aint shit but where are our positive role models  
The best we can hope for is a full time job at McDonald's  
But I don't know Ronald so they got me working nine-hour shifts at Kmart  
Overworked, underpaid and under appreciated  
We live in a fucked up environment and to be completely honest I hate it  
They say it's not right for us to hate where we come from  
Well you spend a year where I live and we'll see how much you would enjoy coming home  
The West-Side of Chicago, known to us as the Windy City  
Where bums live on the streets begging for spare change but angered when people show them pity  
I look at my surroundings knowing that things are real shitty  
Now it's clear why Mayor Daily wants my kind out of his metropolis city  
Drive through Chicago and let's see how much equality truly exist  
Hookers getting pimped on Cicero  
Fourteen-year-old girls shaking their ass on Fullerton thinking they're hot  
But what's hot about teenage moms and crack heads and bums?  
Mom's and Daddy coming home drunk not providing for flesh and blood created from their own  
Now how are we supposed to understand the meaning of true love?  
When we would rather allow our sons and daughters to grow up selling drugs then give up our deadly habit of doing drugs  
And we wonder why they call us the lost generation  
Because we're constantly killing ourselves when we should be investing time to make something better of ourselves  
Lazier than a five-hundred pound elephant after a good nut  
It's becoming way too easy for us to just give up  
But pride keeps getting in my face  
Checking me, putting me back in my place  
Blacks are tired of dying but too afraid to live  
They say the only way to end this cycle is to learn to give

# Measure

## Curse the Man

*Jen Zak*

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FIFTY pounds l off my BACK

F l o a t i n g

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away

Curse the **man** who created DEADLINES

Curse the **man**— Nowhere to f

a

l

I to—I need to sleep...zzz...

**Untitled**

***Kenny Shumard***

Is this shame, this black dark feeling inside?  
This hole in my soul and my head and my heart  
This feeling of loss and despair and emptiness  
Is this regret?  
Is this fear I'm not where I belong?  
Where do I belong?  
I don't know...  
God help me  
Guide me  
Can I make it right?  
No – I think now.  
But is it because it's no longer possible  
— Because I've waited too long—  
or because I'm too afraid?  
Ah, that's the question.

Measure  
2002-2003 Edition